



Sevenairs Consulting Ltd

Pitt Street, Radcliffe, Bury

Safety Assessment

February 2026



Document Control

Report Title:

Pitt Street, Radcliffe, Bury – Safety Assessment

Date of Site Visit

30th January 2026

Document Reference

2026-02 Radcliffe SA – Revision 1

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On behalf of

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Highway Authority / Overseeing Organisation

Bury Council

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Document History:

Revision	Date	Description	By
0	08.02.2026	For review	HV
1	12.02.2026	For issue	HV



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Safety Assessment

Introduction

Sevenairs Consulting Ltd. has been commissioned by Gartwork Architecture, on behalf of Frank Ratcliffe Roofing, to undertake a Safety Assessment at their site on Pitt Street in Radcliffe, Bury.

The purpose of the assessment is to provide an independent review of any inherent safety risks relating to a proposed replacement of an existing static non-illuminated advertisement billboard with a new LED billboard to the north of the site. The assessor has, where appropriate and justified, offered recommendations to each identified issue that would remove or reduce the specific risk. The site location and existing arrangement is shown on Figure 1 below, with a wider location plan shown in Appendix A.



Figure 1 – Safety Assessment site location.

Image Source: Google Maps

The assessment has considered the impact of the proposals on all road users who may be affected at and in the vicinity of the site.

Site Description

The site is located to the south of the A665 Bolton Road and east of Pitt Street. The site currently comprises of a works depot and storage site for a roofing contractor. The site is situated to the west of Radcliffe. This area of Radcliffe is predominantly residential with a number of local amenities along Bolton Road itself.

Bolton Road runs along the northern side of the site and is a single carriageway road, subject to a 30mph speed limit, measuring approximately 8.0m opposite the site with footways both sides. Bolton Road is a key route between Radcliffe and Bolton and has a residential frontage on both sides with terrace type houses set back around 2m from the back of footway providing space for narrow front gardens.

The site is located on a left-hand curve in the road when approaching towards the existing static sign with the building line and landscaping on the nearside limiting the observation distance to a maximum of around 120m. The approach is generally level with no notable gradient influence on the approach. Waiting restrictions are provided on each side of Bolton Road with an 'at any time' restriction on the northern side preventing parking and waiting as well as a mix of 'at any time' and 'peak hour' restrictions on the southern side.

Pitt Street runs along the western side of the site with a carriageway surface that is in a poor state of repair consequentially limiting the speed of vehicles on this road. It was unclear from the carriageway markings as to what restrictions were in place for waiting or loading. Pitt Street is a small, mainly residential road and is unlikely to carry a high proportion of unfamiliar, non-local vehicles.

At present there is a static, non-illuminated billboard located on the western side of the site. This is located above the site boundary fencing with a mounting height to the underside of about 2.0m. The existing sign faces eastbound vehicles on Bolton Road, is set back approximately 1.5m from the edge of the highway and measures approximately 1.2m high by 2.0m wide.



Figure 2 – Existing static sign and surrounding context.

Proposals

It is proposed to replace the existing advertising billboard on the western side of the site with a static internally illuminated LED billboard. The replacement billboard will be mounted marginally higher than the existing billboard so as not to be obstructed by the existing boundary fence. The new billboard will measure 3.84m wide by 1.92m high (landscape orientation).

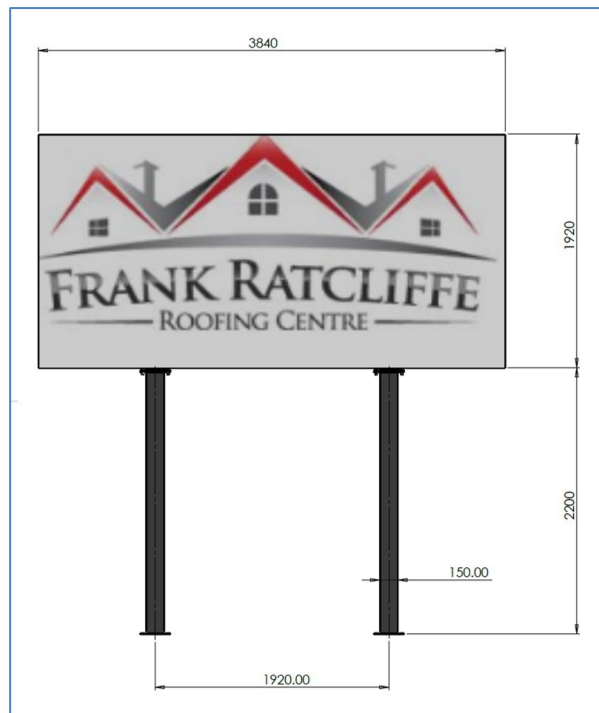


Figure 3 – Proposed sign.

Methodology

In the 2018 review by the CEDR Transnational Road Research Programme in to “The safety effects of (digital) roadside advertising: an overview of the literature”, fifty studies that considered the effects of roadside advertisements on crash risk and road user behaviour were reviewed. In total, five of these studies looked at the association between crashes and roadside advertisements although no firm conclusions were able to be drawn. (One study found an increase in collisions whilst the other four found no change). It was therefore decided to undertake a site-specific assessment of the above proposals within the context of the local road environment and observed road user behaviours.

This assessment was carried out as a desktop exercise, including a review of relevant documents, reports, site photographs and plans shown in Appendix B, alongside a site visit undertaken by the Lead Assessor. The assessors are appropriately qualified, both meeting the requirements to act as Road Safety Audit Team Leader as set out in the Highways England document GG 119 ‘Road Safety Audit’ (Revision 2), and the assessment has been carried out using engineering judgement based on experience in highways, road safety engineering and collision analysis.

This Safety Assessment has been carried out by:

- Haydn Vernals FCIHT FIHE CMILT MSoRSA Directive 2008/96/EC (Certificate of Competency)
- Sarah Vernals BAHonsQTS NPQH MCIHT

A site inspection was carried out by both assessors on Friday 30th January 2026 between 10:30 and 11:00 hours during which the weather was overcast and the road surface damp. Traffic conditions were light and free flowing, with a small number of pedestrians observed and no cyclists observed.

A visibility assessment undertaken on site indicated that the existing billboard was visible from approximately 120m, based on the driving position of an eastbound driver.

To determine the level of risk associated with the proposals, the assessment has focussed on the following core areas:

- Level of distraction likely from the proposals;
- Complexity of the task of driving past the site; and
- Existing 5 Year collision history and observed road user behaviours.

To assess the magnitude of any road safety risks arising, a risk assessment matrix was used, which is in line with that provided in the guidelines on Safety Risk Assessment (DMRB GG104 Table E/C.1)

Likelihood (L) x Severity (S) = Risk Value (R)			Severity (S)				
			1 - Minor harm	2 - Moderate harm	3 - Serious harm	4 - Major harm	5 - Extreme harm
			Minor damage or loss no injury	Slight injury or illness, moderate damage or loss	Serious injury or illness, substantial damage or loss	Fatal injury, major damage or loss	Multiple fatalities, extreme loss
Likelihood (L)	1	Very unlikely; highly improbable, not known to occur	1	2	3	4	5
	2	Unlikely; less than 1 per 10 years	2	4	6	8	10
	3	May happen; once every 5 – 10 years	3	6	9	12	15
	4	Likely; Once every 1- 4 years	4	8	12	16	20
	5	Almost certain; Once a year or more	5	10	15	20	25

Risk Value (R)	Required Action
Low (1-9)	Ensure assumed control measures are maintained and reviewed as necessary.
Medium (10-19)	Additional control measures needed to reduce risk rating to a level which is equivalent to a test of SFAIRP for the population concerned.
High (20-25)	Activity not permitted. Hazard to be avoided or risk to be reduced to tolerable.

The criteria are illustrated in quantifying the risks of injury collisions can be determined by assessing the frequency and/or likelihood of conflict being realised, and the resultant severity of injury likely to be incurred by highway users. A collision is a multi-faceted event which is determined principally by

factors such as the highway layout/environment, speed/flow of vehicles and driver behaviour. The repercussions for the level of injury sustained to victims is a consequence of the aforementioned as well as vehicle impact speed, the relative vulnerability and protection which has been offered to the collision victims likely to be the main determining factors.

Personal Injury Collisions

A review of the most recent 5 years Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data was undertaken using Collision Plot. Between 1st Jan 2020 and 31st Dec 2024 there were no collisions recorded that could be considered as within sight of the proposed billboard.

One collision occurred to the east of the billboard location on Sunday 5th May 2022 at 17:15 on Bolton Road near the junction with Acre Street and resulted in a slight injury collision. The road was described as being dry and the weather was fine. The collision occurred between two cars.

The collision record here does not point to an existing collision problem at or on the immediate approaches to the site.

Safety Observations and Findings

As noted in paragraph 067 of the Planning Practice Guidance for advertisements, by their nature all advertisements are intended to attract attention. Whilst it is proposed to locate the LED billboard facing eastbound traffic, the site is located in a busy street scene with numerous other advertising billboards, decorative shop frontages and signing on both sides of the carriageway.



Figure 4 – Eastbound approach the to the existing static sign and surrounding context.

The LED billboard is intended to replace an historic billboard and is located such that it is only visible to eastbound vehicles. The road layout here is a relatively simple one with movements into/out of Pitt Street junction expected to be light. Speeds on Abbeydale Road were observed to be slow, although a small vehicle activated speed sign was present adjacent to the Abbey Hand Car Wash.

Specific information regarding the type of billboard and advertisements to be shown are not currently known. There is a concern that, should the LED displays be complex and frequently changing, the potential distraction may lead to an increased risk of road user distraction and some collision types – especially shunts, side swipe or red-light violation collisions. There are therefore important guidelines that must be adhered to in order to ensure that the change to an LED display does not significantly increase the level of distraction to road users at the junction.

Issues identified

Based on the above and the road context for the proposed changes, the assessment has identified the following potential safety issues and recommends the following interventions in order to reduce or overcome the risk associated with these.

Issue 1 – Location: Eastbound approach to the sign.

Issue: No information has been provided regarding the transitions between images, should the displays cycle through numerous advertisements. Should a slow or irregular transition be provided (e.g. a merge, swipe etc) this could prolong the time for which a driver may be distracted, increasing the risk of a collision.

Risk rating: Likelihood 5, Severity 2, Value 10 (Medium)

Intervention: It is recommended that a transition of no longer than 1 second is provided.

Client confirms *“Distractive content would normally be associated with video content which would not be used in this application, images will have zero transitions”*.

Risk rating following mitigation: Likelihood 2, Severity 2, Value 4 (Low)

Issue 2 – Location: Eastbound approach to the sign – during the hours of darkness.

Issue: No information is currently provided with regard to the specific type and function of the LED billboard. During the hours of darkness there is a risk that the sign may be blinding for drivers as they pass the bend in Bolton Road and the sign come into sight, risking shunts or loss of control collisions.

Risk rating: Likelihood 5, Severity 2, Value 10 (Medium)

Intervention: It is recommended that the sign is provided with sensors to ensure that the level of brightness does not become blinding or an excessive distraction during the hours of darkness.

Client confirms *“The light sensor will be set minimum and max brightness based on environmental luminance during installation. We set a standard brightness as a percentage (for example 1% would be 60 nits)”*. Client also confirms *“Timings – the LED display will be switched on during normal business hours and switched off in the evening around 10pm”*.

Risk rating following mitigation: Likelihood 2, Severity 2, Value 4 (Low)

Issue 3 – Location: Eastbound approach to the sign.

Issue: No information is yet known regarding the types of advertisements to be used. Sequencing of advertisements (where a message is spread over sequential advertisements), or adverts containing phone numbers and website addresses have been found to require increased amounts of eye dwell time to assimilate information. Given the number of advertisements proposed, these types of advertisements would lead to an increased risk of collisions.

Risk rating: Likelihood 5, Severity 2, Value 10 (**Medium**)

Intervention: It is recommended that the advertisements are not sequential and that they avoid inclusion of phone numbers and website addresses.

Risk rating following mitigation: Likelihood 2, Severity 2, Value 4 (**Low**)

Summary and Conclusions

This report has been produced to provide an assessment of the likely changes to the risks to road users arising from the change of an existing billboard on Bolton Road in Radcliffe to a new LED display billboard. The LED billboard is to be located at a higher level and is marginally larger than the existing billboard.

There is no observable pre-existing injury-collision problem at the site or on the immediate approaches to it. A review of the guidance for the provision of LED advertising displays shows that restrictions are provided with regard to content, in terms of the use of moving or road sign related content as well as notes on the brightness of displays during the hours of dusk and darkness. However, specific information regarding the proposed sign was not available at the time of writing.

It is therefore recommended that:

- a) In line with established guidance, the maximum luminesce is suitably limited through the hours of dusk and darkness.
- b) The displays on the proposed LED panels are provided in line with guidance for content (i.e. static images not containing images that resemble road signs or traffic signs) and transitions (i.e. no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images and a transition of no longer than 1 second).
- c) That the board is dimmed appropriately during the hours of darkness.

should the above recommendations be adopted, it is considered that the proposals pose a minimal change to the risk to road users.

Appendix

